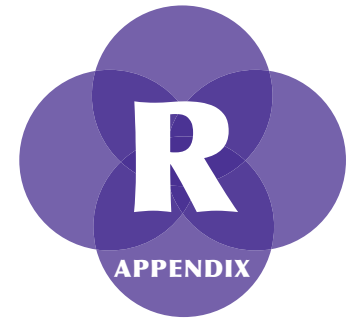


EXAMINING STUDENT WORK



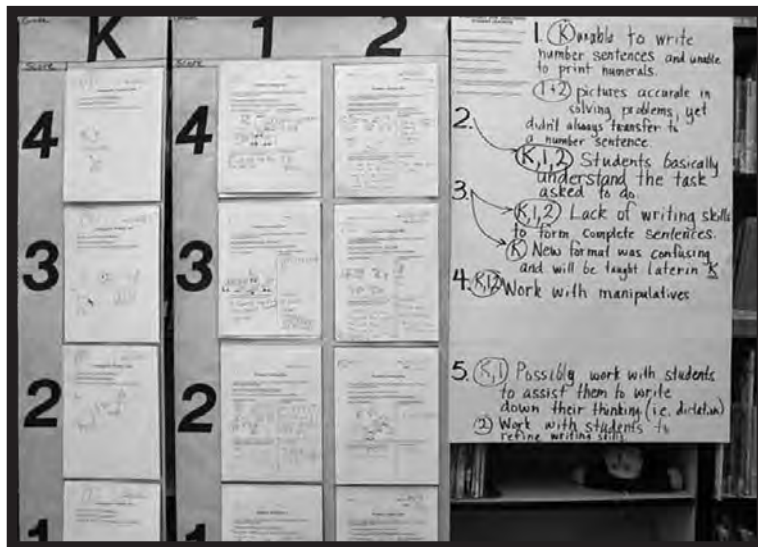
Purpose	The purpose of this activity is to engage staff in discussions about alignment of instruction to standards, within grade levels/subject areas, and across grade levels.
Target Audience	Grade-level/subject-area teachers and/or cross-grade-level teachers.
Time	One-half day, with time before for organizing student work.
Materials	Examples of student work and any appropriate scoring guide, standards frameworks, or assessment rubrics, chart pad paper, and markers. Reserve a room with big blank walls for this activity.

Overview

This activity is eye-opening to teachers as they begin to see why students are responding the way they are responding, and to hear about strategies other teachers would use to move an anchor paper or a project from one level on a rubric to a higher level, etc., from a one to a two, or a two to three, etc. The process also spawns a new commitment to teach specific concepts at different grade levels so students will be successful throughout their education.

Process Protocol

- Step 1.** Explain that the purpose for looking at student work is to determine how to improve instructional practices to ensure that all students meet the student learning standards.
- Step 2.** Have grade level teams purposefully choose examples of student work related to a specific content area or standard. A rubric can be used or some other criteria to get a selection of performance levels.
- Step 3.** On the wall, vertically, place the number 4, under it the number 3, followed by the number 2, and ending with the number 1 (the same as the scoring criteria you are using). Horizontally, across the top, place numbers or descriptions that spell out grade levels. Line up the student work by grade level and achievement level (see photo).
- Step 4.** After the student work has been posted, have teachers review the work and write on chart paper, answering questions, such as:
 - ♦ What did the student know and understand at this level?



Process Protocol (Continued)

- ♦ What did the student not know or not understand?
- ♦ What questions would you ask this student to learn more about what she/he understands and knows?
- ♦ What strategies would you use to help this student understand the concepts and move to the next level?

Step 5. Have staff members look at the student work at a “4 level” to understand what the standards require across the grade levels. Make sure they look at all the grade levels, not just their grade level.

Step 6. Ask participants to reflect on which concepts need to be taught stronger and determine at which grade level.

Comments to the Facilitator

One of the goals of continuous school improvement is instructional coherence; in other words, making sure that grade levels and subject areas have horizontal and vertical alignment. There are many ways to ensure this alignment.

The *Examining Students’ Work* activity is a very powerful way to assess and ensure alignment, and to engage staff in the conversations about standards, student work, and working together for the benefit of the students.

The more practice in structured settings that teachers have together examining student work as professional development, the more likely it will be that they will spend time informally looking at student work in pairs or in teams. This activity will lead to improved teaching at all levels and in all subject areas.